

THE R. 641 518
Bloudy booke.

OR, 1X 4-2-20
The Tragical and desperate end of Sir
John Fites (alias) Fitz
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THE BRITISH

OR

THE BRITISH AND THE AMERICAN



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A Narration of the *Bloudy Murthers commytted by*

the handes of Sir Iohn Fites (*alias*) Fitz, a Deuonshire *Knight*, vpon two seuerall Men: and lastly, to make vp the Tragedy, vpon himselfe also, at *Twickenham*, nine Myles from London, vpon the seuenth day of August last, 1605.



N Wistocke, a verie ancient place in Deuonshire, distant from Plimouth some tenne miles, dwelt a worshipfull Gentleman, called Maister Fites, who hauing longe time beene married without anie children, had at length, for a blessing to his expectation, a Sonne: whome after he had brought vppe in laudable rudimentes, as well besecmed a careful father, as if his aged yeares hadde scene the hope of his owne posteritie, hee perfourmed the course of Nature, leauing large possessions to his young heir, (being as yet in his Minoritie) of whom the world hoped nothing but a fruitful ripenes, of so towardlie a springal, his comelinesse

of personage increasing with his yeares, and his discretion with his personage: he was in his nonage a Ward vnto sir Arthur Gorge, a worth. knight. He took to wife the daughter of sir Wil. Courtney, a man grac't with all perfection of an honorable mind. A man, louing his countrey, and for his worthie carriage, iustly beloued of his country: neither did this his faire daughter degenerate from the auncient stocke of her father, of whose praise (since vertue chieffie commendeth it selfe) I cannot sufficiently speake, neither in setting forth of it, can I bee deemed partiall, since her deserts exceed the measure of partialitie: for as she was a modest maiden, so being married she gaue euident proofes of a vertuous wife. But her young husbände sir John (although not then knighted) little regarding the happines of so rare a bedfellow, followed such errors as youth councelled, & follic led him into, truth it is, if his actions had beene equally agreeable to his person, or his giustes of mind, as plentifully bestowed, as the naturall lineamentes of his bodie, he hadde beene the compleate mirrour of

of an accomplisht Gentleman.

But it is commonly scene, where God indueth vs with more special tokens of fauor, we by our owne pronesse to vicious iniquity, deface his Image, and euermore indeuor to pollute his benefits with our wicked transgression; it was well said;

turpibus ac prauis imitandis

dociles omnes sumus,

This was too true verified in sir Io. Fites, who a while after fell into the carelesse race of a dissolute life, and although by the often instigation of his tender harted wife, he was many times withdrawne from sundrie temptations of lewd retainers, yet hadd not the countenance of his better friends, and their friendly perswasion counsailed him, doubtlesse he had fallen into misfortune, ere misfortune had been ready for his fall. Many friends and wel-willers he hadde, whose account might of right challenge the rancke of gentilitie and reputation.

Amongst manie, to (whom in the links of perfect friendshippe, he was ingaged) one gentleman most especiallie in all rightes of
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loue and reguarde, tendered him, (and as it seemed) was as much of him againe respected, his name was maister Slanning, a worshipfull Esquire and a proper Gentleman, of goodlie liuing, and deserued credite, of whom most men could but speake wel, since of al men he was generalie reputed wise and courtcous. This Gentleman euer inwardlie affected Sir John Fites, so that the Countrie noted them (for firme and mutual loue) to be vnfained friends, and so indeed they wer, vntil mishap (euer fatal to sir Iohn his proceedings) crossed their affectionat asociation with this mischance.

Meeting on a time at Tauestocke (neere which S. Iohn dwelt) at dinner with manie of their neighbors and friends, with great varietie of merriments, and discourse, they outstript the noon-tide: Amongest other their table talk, S. Iohn was vantiing his free Tenure in holding his land, boasting that hee held not a foot of any but the Queen in England; to whome maister Slanning replied, that although of courtesie it were neglected yet of dewe and common righte, hee was

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to pay him so much by the yeere for some small Land held of him, the rent beeing by reason of friendship long time intermitted. Vpon which wordes, Sir *Iohn* (grounding his occasion vpon choller, and heating that choller with disdain and pride) told him with a great oath, hee lyed: & withall, gaue fuell to his rage, and reines of spight, to the vniustnes of his anger, offering to stab him.

But Maister *Slanning*, who was known to be a man of no lesse courage, and more curtesie, with a great knife that hee had, wardded the hazard of such threatnings, vppon which grew both multiplication of wordes, and increase of hatred on both sides; vntill by the fayre mediation of theyr friends the present, they were accorded to a fained reconciliation: so that in brieft, after a while, Maister *Slanning* priuately with his man departed homewards.

Long had he not ridden, but commaunding his man to walke downe his horses in the way, himselfe the whiles taking the greene fieldes for his more cōtented walke, looking backe, hee might beholde Sir *Iohn*

Fires with foure more galloping amaine after him. Which sight, as it could not but breede doubtfull and fearefull suspicion, so could it not but bee a great amazement to Maister Slanning, who little thought on the desperate plot of so vicious a minded blood-sucker.

Sir Iohn no sooner drewe neere him, but Maister Slanning assuring himselfe of his purposed malice, and most malidious drift, asked him the occasion of his comming: to whom Sir Iohn (in the rude language of scorne and wrath) made answer, he would now reuenge himselfe for his disgrace, and so at once they fell all vpon him, who with as determinate a resolution defended himselfe, beeing indeed a man of an vndaunted spirit. And seeing before his face shame impudent, and hope of lifes securitie, altogether desperate, he with as bold stomacke as a wounded dying man, stood vpon the garde of his owne ablenesse, vvhiles Sir Iohn beeing prickt on by the bloody vrging of one Crosse his man, grew to be handred in his butchery: so that one coming behind

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Maister Slanning with a blowe, (guided by the hand of a villaines hart) strooke him on the head, who falling and staggering backward, was by Sir Iohn run through the body, leauing his liuelesse carkasse a monument of terrors, to affright the guiltie consciences of vnmercifull homicides: but as the one is hastning to the graue, so is the other making preparation for flight to escape death, not shame.

Great was the lamentation that the country made for the death of so beloued a gentleman as Maister Slanning was. As for Sir Iohn, hee soone got himselfe away, leauing the fullmouth'd report of infamous rumour, to rumour abroad; the report of so infamous a deed; but as for his wife & mother, (virtuous Gentlewomen) the torment of theyr sorrow, is easier to be imagined then felt: who in the anguish of theyr greefes did penitance for his rashnesse, and in the zeale of theyr prayers, laboured for his harty contrition.

Hee for the space of a yere, or neere there about liued in Fraunce, of whose carriage

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there,

there, it is to bee coniectured that it was no otherwise then indifferent, yet can I not excuse him in this his exile for a penitent conuertite, howsoeuer the worlde generally deemed the best: But in his absence, the good Gentlewoman led a widdowed lyfe, and by as many means as the procurement of her woorthy freendes could effect, or her owne industry labour, shee got some hope of a promised pardon, vpon which after a twelue monthes absence Syr Iohn returned home, with a seeming likelihoode of repentant sorrow for his former misdeede, shewing outwardly euident promises of new reformation and amendement, as seeming a mortified man for his trespassse past, and assuring farre better hopes to come.

In thys meane tyme he had procured for his more quiet content, at least a repriual, if not a pardon, but with thys promise, of his good behauiour euer after. There awhile he lyued welcommed of all, curteous to all, and therefore of all welbeloued: but as it is commonly seene, a man naturally hardned in ill, can hardly amende his deformity of wicked-

The bloodie Booke.

wickednes, with cūning of dissembling pretended glosse, so afterward chaunced with thys man, who in continuance of tyme, did not onely proceed in vnlawful courses of abuse, but would oftentimes glory in his former execrable fact, & beeing now in a manner prest, in the high-way of all abhominacion, he began to roote his thoughts to plot nothing but mischief, insomuch as first, he by little and little lothed his lawful bed, turning his pleasures to lawlesse desires, neyther could the sweete remembrance of his wiues earnest affection, withdraw him from comforting himselfe with loose prodigals.

A lamentable sight it was to see a man of his rancke, place, and calling, to be so vainly carried away with following the depraved humours of light company: neyther could the intreaty of Freendes, the perswasion of his allyes, the counsel of his wel-wishers, nor the comon scandall of the world, make him blush at his own follyes. Strange it was that a man beeing so forewarned, should not be forearmed, for his owne harmes could not make him beware, neyther could the great

nes of Gods fauour shewed to him, enforce him to consider the foulenes of his former offences detestation, and conforme his after age to a more serious meditation of the infinite benefites bestowed vpon him, but the longer he liued, the worse he liued.

At what tyme his excellent Maiesty our King, (after his coronation,) was pleased to honor our English Gentlemen with that auncient rewarde of true deserts, woorth Knighthood, it likewise pleased his royall Grace amongst many of all Shires throughout his Realme, to inuest in that order thys Sir Iohn Fites, who vnder this title of honor thought to maske his deeds of vice, & vith the very founde of Knight, to boulder out the community of his rybts: insonuch as wheras before he was forward, he was now both forward, & bold: forward to attempt, bolde to iustifie, any vniust wrong that his loose behauiour should vnder goe. Nowe began hee to thinke that the world should wink at his impieties, his credit and knight-hood was a sufficient priuiledge. Now began hee to entertaine into his society (as associates)

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sociates) men both of dissolute & desperate fortunes, amongst whom was one (as ring-leader to the reachlesse content of his pampered desires) named commonly *Lusty Lacke*, one whose meanes were indeede meane, whose good qualities altogether none: but for that as many as knowe him, knowe him without description, the sequell shall testifie the honesty of his conuersation.

This lusty Royster beeing by *Sir Iohn* easily accepted, and for a more speciall grace that hee had in dooing ill, admitted into his society, lunked so far into his lyking, as that hee was not himselfe without his companie: insomuch as that Towne of *Tandstocke*, though otherwise orderly gouerned with sobriety, & wisdom of good Magistrates, was thereby infected, with the beastly corruption of drunkennesse. *Sir Iohn* by his own inclination apt, and by his retained companions viced, perswaded the more, to run headlong into such enormities as diuine sensuality and pleasures inclinet vnto; spending theyr tyme in riotous lussuings, & feasting in abominable drunkennesse being
drunke,

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drunke, they blaspheme and sweare, and in
thys theyr blasphemy, they teare the diuine
name of their almighty Creator into a thou-
sand peeces, neyther regarding hope of re-
demption, or dreading feare of damnation,
plucking men by night out of theyr bedds,
violently breaking windowes, quarrelling
vwith Ale-conners, fighting in private brab-
bles amongst themselves: all vy which hazard,
(eyther of particuler dangers, or common
course of Law) could not moue Syr Iohn to
breake of his disordered route, but whē they
had abused the townesmen, and disturbed
theyr neighbors, Syr Iohns owyn house vvas
their safest sanctuary, or receptacle to cloake
theyr out-rages: so as it seemed, they liued
as in tyme of old the common Outlawes of
thys Land dyd, heyther worshypping God
nor honouring Prince, but wholly subiect to
theyr contents alone.

On such like intollerable courses of abuse,
beynd vertue, or gentility, did Sir Iohn e-
uer with his accomplices, in all his disorders
spend his time, little studying to benefite his
Country, by being a profitable member of
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the Common-weale, or little reckoning to be a good subiect, by obseruing the peaceable statutes of his Prince, but continuing daily to increase the multitude of his riots, hee said with the Poet,

Cum vino sumptus cum blandis lauta puellis,

Mensa placet, baccho prodiga iuncta Venus.

Wine and women bring most men to perdition, for one is so inevitably awayted by the other, that a roysting drunkard is most commonly noted for an incontinent lecherer. This was not falsified in Sir Iohn Fines, who so wholly addicted himselfe to all detestable and vicious defamations, that it shamed him not (after his distemperatures abroad) to bring queanes home with him, not esteeming the precious modestie of his viues bed, and the chaste deserts of so vertuous a Lady, vwho heereafter may very well serue as a rare patterne to all wiues, (that are vnblest in hauing such husbands) howe to carry themselves with humility, and winke at it with patience. So did this Lady, vntill her vnthankfull husband (glutted in his owne lust) thought her very presence to be

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an obstacle, and bar to ypprayd his incontinence: for which cause (without cause) hee beganne to fall into dislike with her, and at length, would neyther vouchsafe her maintenance, or house-rooms, but with words of disgrace turned her out of his doores, not leauing her attended by any to conduct her.

In thys plight of distresse, the vertuous Lady (seeing, & by experience hauing had too firme a prooffe, of the misery of such a husband) could not but thinke herselfe vnhappy, howsoeuer indeede shee in this vnhappines was blest; for by these meanes she auoyded further perill of death, which hee in his steame of wine, had bin likely to haue offered vnto her. In breefe, beeing thus left to her misfortunes, shee returned to her worthy Father, who with much ioy, receiued his distressed Daughter, with a young daughter of hers also: so that herein she was most fortunate, that she was safe, where she might heare of her Knights outrages, but not indure the. This Lady beeing by him in this wise turn'd away, hee howe knewe himselfe to be the onely mainteiner of himselfe, and

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and might as he thought now be imboldened to follow his own loosnes. Nowe was his owne house without contradiction, or controlement, open to his associates, where nowe (if they please) they may erect a little Common-wealth of many iniquities, and much imputation. His purse they abused, his goods they consumed, and of his person they made a stale to their misdemeanors: all feared him, few loued him, neither was his worshipp as much to be referenced, as his lewd manners to be abhorred: for continuing and insisting in his licentious, and odious courses, not long before his coming towards London, being in the heat of his old disorder, he, (being backt by his retainers) fell out with an Officer of the Towne, and after vwith many reprochfull words and vpraydings, that he reuiled him withall, forgetting both himselfe, the person, and the place, hee with many blowes of his dagger, broke his head in such sort, as the man being carried home, & layd in his bed, it vvas greatly feared, that hee could not escape death: which had it hapned, questionlesse

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it had not onely been a great preiudice, but also an indangering to Sir Iohn his own life, who after thys deed, was so farre f^ro^m doubting the worst, as that hee little regarding the hatred of his act, stoutly perseuered in the accustimation of his former breaches of all cōmendable carriage. But it is euermore notable, that men ouer whom sinne hath greater predominance, are reserued for more especiall misfortunes, vntill at last, being ouer-ripened, they fall by theyr owne rottennesse, which on this wise happened to Syr Iohn Fites.

Maister Slanning after his death left behind him for pledges of Gods blessing toward him, two sonnes, and one daughter, his heyre beeing inward to a Knight of that Country of good account and credit, which heyre of Maister Slannings, beeing come to yeeres of discretion, vpon agreeuances of his Fathers death, beeing, (as iust reason was) loath to sell his deere Fathers blood, and bearing a minde to reuenge himselfe by course of right, and Law, vpon the butcher of his Fathers life: knowing that Syr

Iohn

The bloodie Booke.

John had but a conditionall and no speciall pardon, (as *Syr John* himselfe gaue foorth, and falsly blinded the worlde withall) vsed meanes for his attachement, eyther to procure better meanes, or aunswer the proceedings of Iustice in that case prouided.

Thys beeing heard of *Syr John*, (who amidst his ryots little dreamed on any such incumbrance) it draue him to diuers shyfts, but beeing well befrended, (if his carriage had bin such to haue deserued theyr friendships who indeed were his freends) he hauing now no hopes, but such as relay vpon theyr credit, for his better discharge vvas driuen to cōsider better of the vneuen race of his life past, assuring himselfe that he was become to the world so rediculous, in himselfe so faultie, and of his owne ablenesse so insufficient to accomplish his desires, that if hee could not procure a newe and absolute Pardon, the old offence of his, being laid to his charge, and his riots since, likely to be aggravated by the vulgar knowledge of the whole Country, it would surely put, not onely his reputation, but also his lyfe in
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double ieopardy: These reasons well cancelled, feare, not shame, made him hasten some other course to be presently thought on, and in some measure to beware of perils to come, though scarce repent his misdeedes past, *Oderunt peccare mali formidine pena*, doubt of trouble, not hartie cōtition, pricketh the wicked to auoyde further lapses, when as the loue of vertue maketh the vertuous abstaine from doing euill. So Syr John, seeing how by his inordinate disorders he had impaired his estate, seuer'd himselfe frō his wife, wedded himselfe to wilfull obstinacie, abused his neighbours, murdered his freends, cōsorted himselfe with villaines, & caused himselfe to be so odious, as his life was now in new danger, he now thought it behooued him to make freends, and to that intent hee posted toward *London*, where by the way, (continually Furies tormenting his minde) ere he came to his hopes, he ended his lyfe. For in his iourning towards *London*, an accident of great ruth and pittie happened in thys lamentable sort. Syr John, (harboring euen in despite of his owne villa
alduch
guilty

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guilty conscience in a grieued breast) euen
as he rode by the way, often ranne ouer the
whole course of his former euil life : and ne-
uer til now did he begin to ballance his own
rashnes , & to consider the reason of his in-
tended iourney, which feares of his , nowe
doubting least that worthy Gentleman his
Father in law, vrged by the wrongs done to
his daughter, would not only deny him his
befriending fauour, but also be a plaintife a-
gainst his inordinate course of life, (though
grounded vpon no certainty but the guilti-
nes of his own conceit) he began to fal into
a desperate kind of lunacie, as by the sequell
of his detestable deede it plainly appeared.
For hastning towards London, he appointed
his fooreman to meet him by the way, who
enquiring as hee went for his Maister, met
him by hap at Kingstone vppon Thames,
where he allighted into his Inne, & hauing
supped (as his order was) hee soone be-
tooke himselfe to his bedde : but as a man
that hath committed some notorious and
memorable crime, being followed by the
County, flyeth into a large vast house, and
hideth

hideth himselte, at euery creak of the wind feareth the entrance of some searcher, or at euery styr of a rat doubteth the attachment of some officer, euen so Syr Iohn, hauing committed the crime of murther, and riot, and flying into the sanctuary of a disperfed and molested mind, was amidst his quiet followed and affrighted, by the officers of vengeance, guilt, and terror. In his dreames he muttered fearefull wordes, grievous sighes, & deep-fetcht grones: most fearefull were his visions, and so terrible vnto him, that where hee lay in rest hee suddainly start vp, and called for his horses, intending to post presently away, for that as he said, Sir *VVilliam Courtney*, with a number in his company were at hand to apprehend him, neyther could they of the house perswade him to the cōtrary. Moreouer, so strange & dreadfull was his owne minde vnto him, that hee would not stay, euer-more crying, that Syr *VVilliam* was at hand to apprehend him, in somuch as his gelding being brought him, in the dead tyme of night riding through the Towne, hee met the watch in the streetes, at

at the sight of whome he cryed aloud, they were come, they were come: but the watch being by his man more certaiulie informed of this his so sodaine malladie, assured him that they were not sir William, but the neighbors of the towne; adding withall, that he need not doubt, for Sir William was neither comming, nor meante to followe him: with whose admonitions beeing somewhat for the time qualified (not perswaded) hee rode ouer Kingston Bridge, towards London; but in the waie betwene Kingston & Twicknam, after hee had straid vppon the Heath a long while, at last hee came vnto a Gentlemans house, which stood somewhat out of the waie, and there he knocked, desiring that as they were gentlemen, they wold respect a Gentleman, and helpe him to som lodging, and vsed such wordes to perswade therevnto, as that those of the house (the time of the night considered) thought him to haue either had some other companie, intending to rob the house, or else to be ouerseene in drinke, or some such matter, in somuch that loath they were to trouble the

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house

house with such a guest, and so sent him away as he came, directing him vnto the next towne. When as trauailing vp and down a long time, somtimes in the waie, sometime out of the waie; at laste hee attained about two of the clocke after midnight, vnto a little Village, called *Twicknam*, som two miles from Kingston (the towne from whence he laste came) and there by chance, oh cruell chance! hapned to light vppon the signe of the *Anchor*, (feare and terrour of his conscience suffring him to passe no further:) the maisters name of that house, being called *Daniell Alley*, where he caused his footman to knocke and beate, and knocked himselfe also vntill such time that he had awaked the goodman of the house, who beeing awakened, rose vnto the window and demanded who vvas there? Sir Iohn Fight answered, Here is a Gentleman, and I want lodging; therefore I pray you open the dore and let me in. The Host of the house replyed, that he was but a poore man, and kept no Inne, but only a victualling house, and that his lodging was verie slender to entertain such

a Gentleman of sort, as he tooke him to be. But the Gentleman sir John Fight answered, that the worst bed that was would serue his turne at that time, and that he coulde be content to lie any where. The good-man of the house, in meere comiseration of his case pittienng him, and in tender compassion of his present estate regarding him, opened the doore, let him into the house, set up his gelding, caused his wife to arise, and lay a cleane paire of sheets vpon their owne bed, and a cleane pilow, her self going to bed in another room, with her mayd and children. Novv as soon as sir John came into the house, without any farther adoe, hee sent his footeman at that time of the night (being vnacquainted with the Way) vnto London, and tolde him that there hee would staye vntill his returne. His footeman being wearie, would faine lodge there also, but hauing no lodging and no man being vp at any other Inn, he was constrained to departe, and so hee tooke on his waie to Brainford, wher he lay that night.

○ Sir John, his gelding set vp, the doores shut

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in, himselfe gone to bed, his footman departed with money in his purse for his expence and all thinges (as it seemed) well, but that the host and his wife obserued a certain wild and stearne looke in his countenance, at last being in bedde, called and knocked for the Host of the house to come vnto him, who being come into the chamber (for the good man himselfe had no place to go to bed in) sir Iohn said vnto him, I pray thee mine host sit by me a while: I will, said the goodman, and so fetching his cloake to wrappe about him, returned and sate downe by his bedde side. But the Gentlemans mind being troubled, he could by no meanes sleepe, or take any rest, but (oftentimes starting verie suddenly as if he had been scard) alwaies hee would be talking of some ydle matter or other, vttering much disjointed talke; as telling the goodman of the house, that he had lyen in a better bed than that was, whereunto the poore man replied, in the pleasingst speeches that he could (because hee noted him to looke somewhat wildly) I make no question thereof sir, but surelie I haue no better

better at this time, (the bed being sufficient for an honest Man) If I had better your worship should haue it, I am sorrie for your sake that it is no better. Thus would hee oftentimes speake vnto him. At another time he saide; I am in Minde troubled, I am disquieted: Then would he turne him from one side to the other. Somtimes he would saie that sir William Courtneys men were com to aprehend him: for the goodmans wife of the house lyeng in the next roome, and another Man named Robert Goddart, who was a day-laborer, and lodged in another room adioyning also, heard both his talke and his vnquiet rest.

Thus troubled in mind, and oppressed, (as by the sequele shall God willing, appear) either with the remorsefull thoughtes of an accusing conscience, or with the despairing remembrance of his forepassed euill life, or with the fearefull appearance of that dreadfull day of iudgement, when all fleshe shall be called to an account for their deeds don, euerie one to receiue according to that hee hath done, either good or euill; or with the

threatninges of Sathan, who visibly (it may be) appeared vnto him, menacing him with eternal damnation for his former wickednesse, or with what other dreadfull apparition, illusion, apprehension, terror or temptation, hee who knoweth all things (and none else) certainlie knoweth. Thus I saie, being disquieted, the good-man of the house remained with him, vntill betweene foure & five of the clocke in the morning; at what time, seeing that the morning was faire, and he had businesse to goe about, hee lefte the Gentleman alone, betweene sleepeinge and waking (as it were) and softly stealing away, because hee would not awaken him if hee could choose, called vnto good-man God-dart (who laie in the Chamber close by) to arise, and so went into his wife and told her; Wife, I must leaue you with this Gentleman, for I must goe my selfe forth to work. Nay, good husband do not so, said she; wil you leaue me at home with him alone, and goe forth your selfe? I pray you do not, for I am afraid of him, methinkes he talks as if he were frantick. Thus did her minde presage
the

the future mischance, which present after fel out. The good-man answered his wife, if I can get another to worke for me, I will stay at home. By this time, the labourer good-man Goddart was vp and ready, being prepared to go mowe some Vetches, and therefore the goodman of the house and he went to fill a bottle of drink to take vnto the field; but as they were together filling the bottle, they heard something giue a iumpe. I think said one of them vnto the other, the gentleman be either leapt, or fallen out of his bed: which wordes they had no sooner vttered, but forth comes Sir John in his shirt, with his naked rapyer in his hande, his eies looking as if they hadde sparkled forth fire; his countenaunce so terrible and gastly, as that it was of power to haue scarred a mann out of his wittes; and his strength so forceable (as it seemd to them) it was bootles for on or two to withstand him, (for needs must he go whom the diuell driues) the men fearfully gaue back, and he slips out at the back dore and so towards the gate which led out of the street into the back-side, and beeing gon forth of the gate, the men stept into the

backside likewise, wher being, said the good man sottlie to the other (the present lighte of his naked weapon, causing a presumption of such a matter) God graunt hee haue not murdered my wife and children; and some made towards the gate, purposing to shutte the gate after him, which he perceiuing, suddenly retires (for his feet were swift to shed blood) and espyeng the man going to shut the Gate, desperately cried out: Ah villaine? Art thou one of them that should apprehend me? Art thou he that shoulde laie holde of me? I will surely kil thee (swearing a blodie oath, if there were no more Men liuing) & therewith suddenly and violentlie ran at the goodman of the house with his Rapier, but feare made the man nimble and swift, for before Sir Iohn could retyre, the goodmanne had closed the gate, and his Rapier point hitting in a little hole of the gate (a fatal hole it was) thrust him quite through the bodie, betweene his shoulder and his breast, so that the man fell downe presentlie and died, onlie with a woful noyse and hydeous shriek, crying out; I am kild. The other man who

was

was close by him, (but that the gate was shut) might wel haue beene serued with the same sawce likewise: wherefore being stricken into such a terrible feare at the death of the goodman of the house, as that he scarcely knew which waie hee vvent, euen as the fearefull byrd, which hearing the sounde of the Hawkes bels, creepeth into euerie bush, thereby thinking to escape death; euen so, I saie, he runs vppe and downe, to seek some place to hide himselfe, from so furious an Enemy. Sir Iohn Fites, being without the gate, runs rounde about by the pale on the streete side, still raging and raving in moste terrible manner.

The good Wife of the house (alas poore soule) hearing the pitteous outcrie and grievous grone that her dyeng husband made, suddenly all amazed, leapes out of her bed in her smocke, to see what the matter was, and not well knowing on which side of the house the crie was, out she ran on the streete side; where as soone as she was stepped out, she meetes sir Iohn with his naked Rapier in his hand, all on gore with the bloud of his

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husband, wherefore in hope of pittie, from
 his pitiless hands, she fell down vppon her
 knees in her snock, and with hands erected,
 prayed, Sweet sir spare my life, & shew mer-
 cie: but hee, as eager and thirstie of bloud,
 without all compassion, twice thrust at her
 naked body, twice he missed her, but stil re-
 enforcing his stroke, thrust againe the third
 time, and then wounded her greeuously in
 the arme, (yet not mortally) ah happie For-
 tune, for her three poore infants sake, that
 she was not sent by his vnluckie hand after
 their father, and they left destitute of both.
 Whereupon perceiuing that it booted not
 to intreat for mercie any longer, she started
 vp, and swiftly fled backe into the chamber.
 A man would iudge that he had bloud eno-
 ugh now, hauing kiled the husband & wou-
 ded the wife: but yet was the Deuil so strōg
 in him, as that not contented therewith, he
 prickes him on vnto further mischiese: hee
 will not be satisfied vnlesse he shed his owne
 bloud likewise. Wherefore most strangely
 (espieng a mudde Wall close by) hee takes
 his rapyer, and laying the hilts thereto, and
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THE BLOODY BOOKE

the point thereof (void of al pittie) vnto his own bre
 runs for gible therevpon, and therewith fell; yet risi
 againe, and pulling the blade out of his bodie again
 he lookes vpon the place to view the wounde, and h
 uing with his eyes looked therevpon, and with h
 fingers handled the same, as woondring at his own
 courage, he grumbled out this speech, to this effect



THE BLOODY BOOKE.

Proude heart, Wilt thou not yeilde? Shall
neither the terror of Justice affright thee?
The edge of this Steele massacre thee? Nor
death it selfe daunt thee? Split, split, and in
this onely wound die: That I thy owner,
may not liue, to heare the honour of my cre-
dite stayned, with these my odious actes.

Thus did he expostulate with himselfe
a while, and after this manner did hee deale
with himselfe.

Now a man would iudge that the Deuill
himselfe should be gluttred with bloud, but
yet, Sir John, (miserable and wretched man
that hee was) takes againe the point of his
bloudyed Rapier, and setting it some twoe
or three inches from the same place, (what
pitty could be expected to bee shewed vnto
other, from one who would shew none vnto
himselfe) with all his mighte, ranne againe
thereupon, goring himselfe quite thorough
the body: And yet again, a second time pul-
ling it out (for Sathans mallice is boundles)
(Oh worthie courage, had it been in a good
cause) he runs into the house after the Wo-
man, but his strength fayling him, downe he
fals

faller in the floore of the house, where hee
 vvas anon (for as yet few had the courage
 to hinder his attempts, were stirring) found
 wallowing in his owne blood, like a Pigge
 that had beene latelie sticke. Oh heauye
 spectacle! Oh Tragicall and rufull sighte!
 Pitty it was, if God had so beene pleased,
 that it had not falne out otherwaies.

Now tell me, thou that readest; Didst
 thou euer read a thing more tragical?
 Didst thou euer looke vppon a more
 wofull spectacle? Didst thou euer heare of
 a more horrible, strange, and lamentable
 fact? Again, if thou enter into a further cō-
 sideration of Gods Justice, is it not a suffici-
 ent warning, to make a man giue himselfe to
 prayer vnto the Almighty God of heauen,
 to bee deliuered from the like temptation?
 Hereby may a man perceue what the worm
 of a mans conscience (of a guilty conscience
 and the guilt of murder depressed with des-
 peration) is. Hereby may al young Gentle-
 men and Gallants, take heed and bee war-
 ned, that they giue not themselves ouer vn-

to their lustes, to follow after and lay holde
 on the least meanes that may be to do euill,
 and thus such meanes, as might leade them
 vnto goodnesse. Hereby may wilde heades
 perceiue what it is to follow luste, drunken-
 nesse, and excessiue riot, the verie true bad-
 ges of a dissolute and vnrulie life, and lastly
 (if God call not to repentance) a wicked &
 vngodly end. Hereby may al Ruffians and
 swearing swaggerers (if any sparke of grace
 remaine in them) bee warned to leaue off
 their wicked liues, and to turne vnto the
 most iuste God, least hee in his iustice suffer
 them to be so tempted likewise. Herby may
 the Stabbers, and killers of this age, be war-
 ned to staie their hands, and not to shedde
 the bloud of Gods saintes (for it is precious
 in his sight) otherwise hee in his Iustice will
 giue them ouer to be tempted of Sathan, to
 be the Butchers of their owne selues, as this
 man was. But let me now proceed to make
 an ende of this wofull and heauye Narrati-
 on.

Neighbors being by this time gathered
 together about the house, came in & found
 the

the man of the house quite dead, hauing yeild-
 ded (no doubt) his soule into the handes of
 his Redeemer. But Sir Iohn Fites not alto-
 gither dead, but fainting for want of stren-
 gth, laie tumbling and wallowing in his own
 gore, (hauing a strong heart, and myghtie
 courage, but yet willing (as it should seem)
 to die if he could, vntill that company bee-
 ing assembled came in, and findinge him in
 that wofull case, tooke him vp, and carried
 him into the chamber, and presentlie Sur-
 geons were sent for to seeke meanes to cure
 him: but he (as vnwilling now to hear of life
 as he was before eager of death) would by
 no meanes endure to hear of any Surgeon.
 But notwithstanding diuers were sent for, as
 namely, maister Quinsie of Brainford with
 others: who being come tented the wounds
 perforce, but he still pulled them out again,
 alwaies crying out, that he would die, and
 not liue. Thus hauing done diuers times,
 at last he was let bloud, and diuers meanes
 vsed for his recouerie, but all preuailed not,
 for after he had liued some 48. houres after
 his hurts, he gaue vp the Ghost.

Vpon

Vppon the Thursday after, the Coroner
 fate vpon the man of the house who was al-
 readie dead, and by verdict there giuen, sir
 Iohn Fires (alias Fitz) was found guilty both
 of the mans death, and his own also, if so be
 he died thereupon. All which notwithstanding,
 because hee was a Gentleman borne,
 and of good kindred, so much friendshippe
 was shewed vnto him, in respect of the wor-
 shipfull stocke from whence he descended,
 as that hee was buried in the Chauncell at
Twickenam,

The Honourable Earle of Northumber-
 land hearing hereof, sent a certaine Gentle-
 man of his old acquaintance to commende
 him vnto him, and also to put him in mynd
 what he had done: how greiuously he had
 offended his maker, in committing so dete-
 stable murthers, as also in laying vyolente
 handes vpon himselfe; and withall persvva-
 ding him to repent, and be content to vse al
 the best meanes that might be for his reco-
 uerie, & not to continue in his wicked course
 But all was one with him, he would not liue,
 but die: only being desired to aske mercie

at Gods hand for his offences, which hum-
bly he did; he said that he was sorrie for the
death of the poore man whom so desperat-
ly he had murdered, and whose wife he had
so greivouslie wounded likewise, leuing 3.
wretched infants vpon the mothers hands.
And being asked whether he would willingly
giue any thing vnto the poore woman in re-
compence of the losse of her husband, hee
was contented to bestowe vpon her an hun-
dred pounds. But whether he had any thing
in his owne power to giue, that knowe not
I. For I think if anie thing be giuen, it must
proceed from his friends goodwils (and pit-
ty but so it should be) and not otherwise.

He would oftentimes after he was woun-
ded, crie out vpon sir William Courneyes
men (whose daughter he married) that they
were come to apprehend him, and that they
would blow him vp with their gunpowder:
all which, questionlesse proceeded from the
guiltinesse of his owne conscience for the
wrongs he had doone: and being once de-
manded wherefore he killed the poor man,
It was not I, said he, that didde it, but one of

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my followers, (which thing is note-worthy)
He left behind him a daughter, whose ward-
ship was presently obtained by an honoura-
ble Earle.

Thus gasty death hauing seized vpon his
corporall body, we will commit his soul (for
albeit his sinnes were great, yet are the mer-
cies of God infinitely greater) into the hands
of the Almighty, (for charitye iudgeth the
best, and hopeth the beste) in whose king-
dome there is nothing but peace.

In the view of these his murthers, there
little needeth anye paraphrase, since euerie
man that thoroughly considereth of the facts
themselves, cannot but in themselves finde
them to be most hainous before God, most
odious before men. This therefore is the
report of his desperat courses in his life time,
who as he cannot be any blot at all vnto o-
ther his vertuous and wel-deseruing friends,
so no question he is no more a grieue vnto
other, then a fearefull example vnto all his
wicked associates.

Obleruations ga- thered out of the former discourse.

MAny and diuers things are in this pre-
cedent lamentable discourse worthie
most deepe consideration, and may
serue, (the true vse of all such stories) to put
vs in mind of our duties towards God, (for
we should not read only to know, but learn
to know, that thereby we follow the good,
and shun the euill) the Prince, and Coun-
trei, and our selues. As namely, the eager
desire that Sathan hath to increase his king-
dome. The watchfulnesse and warinesse
that we ought to haue, that wee come not
within his clawes. The wretched estate of a
desperate mind. The horror and trembling
of a guiltie Conscience, which pursueth a
mans owne selfe, when no man else doeth.
The desperate courses of vnbrideled follie.
The griefe of friends for so hard an hap. The
astonishment of Associates in committing
of mischief. The mallice of Sathan, in temp-
ting vnto euill.

The wofull estate of two Widdowes, the
one in hauing a husband, that was no more
comfort vnto her whiles he liued, and yeil-
ded so great cause of sorrow being dead: the
other, that so suddenly and vnexpectedlie,
had her dearest husband (the one half of hir
life) by such fatall meanes taken from her.
The pittifull estate of three Infants left vpon
the mothers hands, hauing verie small mea-
nes to maintaine them. The great libertie
that power and might (if God guid not the
hart) giueth vnto the performance of euill.
The blindnesse of our sinfull nature, that wil
neuer let vs see into our riotous liues, untill
wee bee carried awaie with a full streame of
wickednesse. The obduracie and hardnes
of a mans hart, enured and accustomed vnto
sin. How apt to follow the worser parte, &
how hardly framed to good. Drunkenes
and fleshly lustes, the effects that follow the.
Euill companions, and lewd retainers, the
discommodities and dangers thereof. Our
forwarneesse in pursuing euill, and slack-
nesse vnto good. The manye miseries that
we fall headlong into, for want of due con-
sidera-

sideration. The temporall crosses that god
sendeth vpon his children, to trie their pati-
ence. What the friendship of man is, and
how soone turned into hate. Gods iudge-
ments vpon the Wicked. His loue vnto the
godlie. And lastly (to close vp this discourf)
a generall warning vnto all, to put them in
mind to amend their wicked liues mispent,
to turne vnto the Lorde whiles they haue
time, and to call for mercie, before the gate
of mercy be shut, that repenting of the euill
past, they may leade their liues more care-
fully, more purely, and more holilie hereaf-
ter: that so dying a godlie death, they may
make a blessed ende. Which that it may
so be, the Lord of his mercy grant
vnto vs all, a sufficient measure
of his holy spirite,
Amen.

FIN JS.